

REPLY TO OFFICE ACTION
DATED APRIL 7, 2008

Appln. No. 10/547,198

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Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 3.
Element 14 has been changed to element 15.

Attachments: Annotated Sheet Showing Changes
Replacement Sheet

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REMARKS

This is in reply to the Office Action dated April 7, 2008.
Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Request for Extension of Time

Applicant hereby requests that the time period for response be extended one month, from July 7, 2008 to August 7, 2008. Applicant authorizes the payment of the one-month extension fee of \$120 pursuant to 37 CFR 1.17(a)(1) by credit card.

Status of Claims

Claims 21-46 are pending. Claims 43 and 44 are rejected for insufficient antecedent basis for the recitation of "the coated surface". Applicant has amended these claims to render this rejection moot.

Claims 21, 23-26, 28, 35-37, 39-42, 45 and 46 are rejected as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,260,906 to Bucholz. Claims 22, 27, 29-34, 38, 43 and 44 are rejected as obvious over Bucholz in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,409,251 to Kaye et al.

Support for Claim Amendments

Claim 21 has been amended to recite the presence of first and second projections in spaced relation longitudinally along the first molded part, the first projection widening toward the outer side of the first molded part, and first and second cutouts in the second molded part, the first cutout comprising a first portion having a first width for receiving the first cutout and a second portion having a second width narrower than the first width, the first projection being slidable into the second portion and thereby forming a locking engagement perpendicular to the longitudinal

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direction. The second cutout receives the second projection and forms a locking engagement of the first and second molded parts in the longitudinal direction. Support for these claim amendments may be found in Figures 2, 3 and 4, noting in particular first cutouts 22 and 23 and their portions 22' and 23' as well as second cutout 24 and first projections 14 and second projections 16. The cutouts and projections and their interaction are described in detail on page 7, lines 12-33 and page 8, lines 1-21. No new matter has been added.

The Traversal

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections, contending that the cited reference, Bucholz, fails to meet the criteria necessary to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Applicant's position is explained in the arguments presented below.

Claim 21

Claim 21 is rejected as obvious over Bucholz. Claim 21 as amended, recites, in relevant part:

(iii) the first molded part further comprises a first projection integrally formed with the mounting portion of the first molded part and protruding toward an outer side of the first molded part, the first projection widening toward the outer side of the first molded part;

(iv) the mounting portion of the second molded part has a rectangular cutout formed therein for receiving the first projection of the first molded part when the first and second molded parts are connected so that the projection engages the mounting portion of the second molded part and secures the first molded part to the second molded part, the cutout widening toward an outer side of the

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second molded part, the cutout comprising a first portion having a first width and a second portion having a second width narrower than the first portion, the first portion for receiving the first projection, the projection being slidable in a longitudinal direction into the second portion and being thereby secured in a positive locking manner in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction;

(v) a second projection integrally formed with the mounting portion of the first molded part and positioned in spaced relation in the longitudinal direction from the first projection;

(vi) a second cutout formed in the second molded part in spaced relation in the longitudinal direction from the first cutout, the second cutout for receiving the second projection and thereby forming a locking engagement of the first and second molded parts in the longitudinal direction upon engagement of the second projection and the second cutout".

Applicant contends that Bucholz fails to teach or suggest: (1) first projections which widen toward the outer side of the molded part; (2) first cutouts which widen toward the outer side of the molded part; (3) first cutouts formed of two portions of different widths which receive the first projections; (4) second cutouts which receive second projections; (5) first cutouts which form a locking engagement perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the molded parts; and (6) a second cutout which forms a locking engagement of the first and second molded parts in the longitudinal direction of the molded parts.

One of the three criteria necessary to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness requires that the reference must teach or suggest all claim limitations. Clearly, Bucholz fails to meet this criteria because it fails to teach the six aforementioned features of the invention recited in amended

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Claim 21. Therefore, Claim 21 is not obvious over Bucholz and should, thus, be allowable.

Claims 22-46 depend, either directly or indirectly, on Claim 21 and should be allowable for the same reasons that Claim 21 is allowable.

Claims 22, 27, 29-34, 38, 43 and 44 depend on Claim 21 and are rejected as obvious over Bucholz in view of Kaye et al. The Examiner again relies on Bucholz as teaching all of the elements of the base Claim 21 but admits that Bucholz does not teach molded parts comprising a coated surface. The Examiner relies on Kaye et al only for its supposed teaching of this feature. However, it was shown above that Bucholz fails to teach all limitations of Claim 21, the recitations of which are incorporated into all of its dependent claims. By the same reasoning as provided above for Claim 21, therefore, it can be seen that the combination of Bucholz and Kaye et al also fail to teach all of the limitations of Claims 22, 27, 29-34, 38, 43 and 44. These claims, therefore, should be allowable over the combination of Bucholz and Kaye et al for the same reasons that Claim 21 is allowable over Bucholz.

Summary

Applicant has demonstrated, in the arguments presented above, that Bucholz fails to teach or suggest all claim limitations of the base claims, and by analogy, the combination of Bucholz and Kaye et al fails to teach all claim limitations of the relevant dependent claims. Thus, the references fail to meet the criteria necessary to establish a *prima facie*

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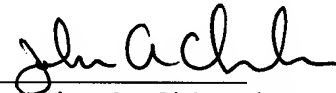
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case of obviousness and the claims should be allowable. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejections be withdrawn and the application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

SYNNESTVEDT & LECHNER LLP

By: 
John A. Chionchio
Reg. No. 40,954

1101 Market Street, Suite 2600
Philadelphia, PA 19107-2950
Telephone: (215) 923-4466
Facsimile: (215) 923-2189

JAC/dml

